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Detrimental Effect of the National Parks
Policy on the Tourism Industry of
Alberta

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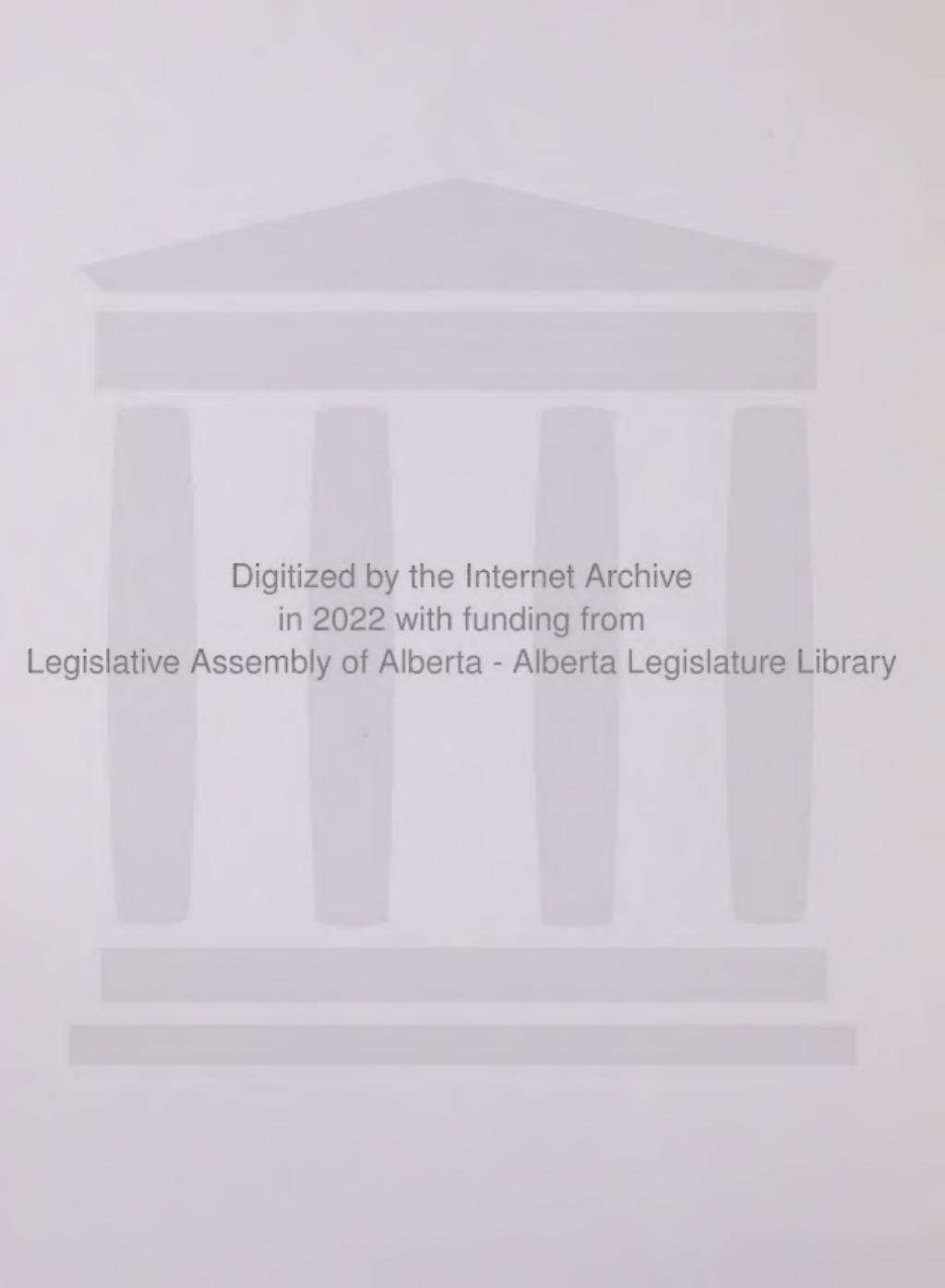
THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT OF THE NATIONAL
PARKS POLICY ON THE TOURIST
INDUSTRY OF ALBERTA

Prepared by
J D. Francis & Associates Ltd.
Public Relations Counsel
and
Nattall & Maloney Ltd.
Advertising Agency

CALGARY and EDMONTON

January, 1966

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ABOUT THE FIRM THAT PREPARED THIS BRIEF

**J. D. Francis & Associates Ltd.
Public Relations Counsel**

and

**Nattall & Maloney Ltd.
Advertising Agency**

This is an Alberta firm which has a staff of 23 in Calgary and Edmonton. It includes the largest public relations staff of any firm west of Toronto.

The company has been active for many years in the Winter Olympic Games organization, having managed the preparation of the 1966 brochure, the 1959 submission, and the 1962 submission to the Canadian Olympic Association.

The company handles advertising for several Alberta Government Departments including the Travel department. Other advertising clients include the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, the City of Calgary department of Industrial Development, the City of Edmonton Electric Light Department, United Grain Growers, and many industrial firms.

The company handles public relations for the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Consolidated Concrete Ltd., The Bank of Canada (Alberta), Dominion Bridge, Honeywell Controls (Alberta) and many other organizations.

John Francis, who is president of both firms, and who worked actively on preparation of this brief, has 11 years full time public relations experience. He is one of two Canadians who hold the degree of Master of Science in Public Relations (Boston University), and also earned a Bachelor of Commerce at University of Alberta. He is presently the National Chairman of Public Relations for the Canadian Public Relations Society. He has lived in Calgary all his life, and knows the National Parks intimately.

Carlotta M. Blue, who collaborated on this brief with Mr. Francis, has been a professional writer for 20 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Ottawa University, and also attended University of Saskatchewan. She, too, is a long time Calgary resident.

The thesis of this report is that National Parks Policy is unfair to the citizens of Alberta and of serious detriment to the third largest industry in the province - Tourism. This conclusion applies to both the written policy and the administration of the policy by the Federal department in charge.

The people of Alberta are equally concerned about the contravention of citizens rights implicit in the new policy as it affects leaseholders in the National Parks in Alberta. The legal and moral aspects of this problem have already been the subject of an urgent letter from Premier Manning to the Prime Minister, and they are dealt with in greater detail in an accompanying brief.

THE DILEMMA

The injustices and the threat to tourism that have arisen from the National Parks Policy are the results of a dilemma caused largely by a conflict between social progress and rigid adherence to concepts of wilderness preservation that no longer are applicable.

The issues are summarized on the next six pages, and discussion in some depth follows.

The reader is referred also to:

National Parks Policy - by Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources - 1964

Winter Recreation and the National Parks - same Department, March 1965

An analysis of the above two briefs prepared by the Banff-Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce and submitted to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources - June 1965

An in-depth review of The National Parks Controversy - summarizing public comment about the issue - prepared by the Banff-Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce - December 1965

A. ORIENTATION (See Chart A)

This is an Alberta problem not a national one. Alberta has ten times as much area in National Parks as any other province. No other province depends on the National Parks for attracting tourists, and for recreation of the citizens, as does Alberta. There is little controversy over National Parks in the other provinces.

B. THE USE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS IS BOUND TO INCREASE

- i) The Canadian Rockies have been advertised throughout the world for many decades, and this advertising will continue.
- ii) The citizens of Alberta are accustomed to using the Rockies as a winter and summer recreation area. They have been encouraged to do this in the past. Their future uses will continue to increase as they acquire more leisure time and as the population grows.
- iii) Because virtually all of the Rockies are confined within the boundaries of the National Parks, these increases in tourism will of necessity occur in the Parks.

C. AS THE USE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS INCREASES, SO WILL THE DEMAND FOR ACCOMMODATION, FOOD, RECREATION, HOUSING

- i) The present policy crams all visitors into three towns for accommodation, when there is an area half as large as Switzerland which could accommodate them. Banff, Jasper and Waterton are already desperately overcrowded in summer. They are so overcrowded that they are unpleasant.
- ii) There is very little to do after dark, or on a rainy day, in Alberta's National Parks. And the recent policy is to discourage virtually all forms of recreation and entertainment.
- iii) There is not nearly enough residential accommodation. Almost none has been built for ten years. Rents are exorbitantly high, conditions are so overcrowded that they are unsanitary. Some of the thousands of summer workers flooding into Banff last year actually had to sleep in the forest. The policy for the future appears to be to discourage housing, thus trying to force dishwashers, maids and everyone else to drive daily from 'outside' the National Parks.

- iv) Education is stimulated by architecture, scenic grandeur and isolation from city pressures. Yet Parks policy is to discourage education, except in connection with nature. Thousands of people gain fresh inspiration at seminars and conferences on business, agriculture, social problems at the Banff School of Fine Arts. The Department of Northern Affairs has stated that this educational service is not desirable.
- v) Successful ski resorts the world over locate accommodation facilities at the foot of the ski hill, thus eliminating daily transportation. This is what skiers seek. Recently, stated National Parks policy indicates that accommodation facilities will ordinarily be permitted only miles from the slopes.
- vi) Ski operations in Alberta National Parks have not been profitable because most of them can do only a weekend business. Operators have not been permitted to build accommodation to attract week long visitors. On the week ends the rush is so great that facilities are overcrowded. Meanwhile thousands of Alberta skiers go to Colorado, Idaho and Switzerland for ski holidays. They go because these places provide facilities where they can enjoy themselves. Almost no skiers come to Alberta from the United States or Europe, despite the fact that Alberta has some of the best conditions in North America.

D. HOW THE NATIONAL PARKS POLICY DEVELOPED

- i) The first park was founded at Banff in 1885 around the sulphur springs.
- ii) From 1885 to 1930 the Parks developed in the following manner;
 - a) Banff, Jasper and Waterton became the major towns;
 - b) Lodges were built in some remote areas;
 - c) The Banff Springs Hotel and the Jasper Park Lodge were constructed;
 - d) Many roads were built.

All the above were done with the blessing and encouragement of the Federal Administrators.

- iii) The parks are now administered under an Act written in 1930. This was at the depth of the great depression and before the advent of the highway, the long range aircraft, the five day week and the seven hour day. In 1930 Alberta had a population of 730,000, less than half what it is today. The authors of this Act could hardly be expected to interpret the social and recreational needs of the 1960's.
- iv) To correct conditions which had arisen under the Act, a new policy was written in 1964. Regrettably this policy represents a step backward from the way in which the Act had been interpreted to date. It would appear that this policy was written by members of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources who openly advocate sterilization of the National Parks.
- v) Following issuance of this 'policy' a storm of protest arose. However, little modification has yet been made except a statement on ski policy, which upon analysis also proved to be no cause for rejoicing.
- vi) The Basic Question - Is it possible to have a policy that applies equally to a National Park which is measured in acres, and to a group of Parks which represent half the area of Switzerland, and which have over two million visitors annually? The commendable goals of preservation of flora and fauna in the small park are just not applicable in such a huge area. There is more than ample space for total preservation, and also for facilities to help the visitor enjoy his stay. It should not be a hardship to stay in a National Park. If we make it so, our tourists will not return.

E. HOW THE ALBERTA NATIONAL PARKS ARE ADMINISTERED

- i) Virtually all decisions affecting Alberta National Parks are taken in Ottawa. They are made by people who have little understanding of what it is like to live in Banff or Jasper or to do business there. The people making the decisions have no responsibility to the citizens over whom they rule, because Banff and Jasper are not permitted to have elected representatives. There is no appeal of rulings by department officials.
- ii) Regrettably, these same administrators who hold so much power appear to have little sympathy with the cause of the tourist, the cause of the businessman, the cause of

Alberta citizens, or the cause of the Alberta tourist industry. Their primary concern is to preserve the wilderness - at all costs:

"I believe there is a practical, if not theoretical, limit to the number of visitors a National Park, or a specific park area, can receive and serve the public in a satisfactory manner and not depreciate the areas involved through heavy visitor use. It is in our best interests as park administrators to help prevent the saturation point from being reached."

J.A. MacDonald, Asst. Deputy Minister

Can this apply to an area so huge and underdeveloped that only five percent of the total is accessible by road?
(See Chart B).

F. HOW THE U.S. SOLVED THE PROBLEM LAST SEPTEMBER

(See News Clipping Exhibit)

A similar National Parks conflict raging in the United States was resolved in September, 1965 by the passing of a new bill governing their national parks.

The bill was passed because of the difficulty of getting good service in the larger parks due to a lack of concession security. It was passed despite strong opposition from the Department of the Interior, which administers the U.S. Parks.

The bill clearly states "the objectives of protecting and preserving the areas and of providing adequate and appropriate services for visitors at reasonable rates."

Among notable provisions the Bill:

- * Permits authorization of the operation of all accommodation facilities, and services for visitors ... in each area ... by one responsible concessioner with preferential right to provide new or additional accommodations, facilities, or services as required to serve the public.

- * Encourages continuity of operation by giving preference in the renewal of contracts or permits to concessioners who have performed their obligations satisfactorily under prior contracts.
- * Grants to concessioners a "possessory interest" in anything they construct and provides for just compensation if the Government takes over. The possessory interest may be assigned, transferred, encumbered or relinquished by the concessioner.
- * Stipulates that all contracts may include provisions assuring concessioners against loss of investment.

EXPANDED VIEWPOINTS

Alberta's tourist industry is being seriously hampered by the present National Parks policy and the outlook is for a much more critical situation to develop within the next decade.

In proof of this contention, the greatest difficulty arises from the vast amount of documented evidence available. To include all of this evidence would make a report so long that it would be impossible to cover it in the short time available. We are therefore following the method of stating basic problems as we see them, citing a few examples to illustrate.

AN ALBERTA PROBLEM, NOT A NATIONAL ONE

* Size Tells Part of the Story

There are just over 12,000 square miles of National Parks in Canada. Of this total, 7,042 square miles are in Alberta -- over 58 percent. For every 1,000 square miles of Alberta territory, there are 28.3 square miles of national park -- more than TEN TIMES the national average.

Quebec has no national parks, Ontario has only 11 square miles. Even British Columbia, with more mountain area and the additional advantage of a long scenic seacoast, has only 4.5 square miles of national parks for each 1,000 square miles of territory.

If Alberta were the same as the national average it would have 672 square miles of national parks. This would offer no problem. If Alberta were equivalent to British Columbia it would have 1,120 square miles. Again no serious problem. But our province has 7,042 square miles.

Even this is not the whole story. The parts of British Columbia which are most accessible to the people of Alberta have also been made into national parks. These areas, just two to four hours drive from Calgary, total 1,671 square miles.

There's more. The above totals do not include Wood Buffalo Park which represents another 14,000 square miles taken from the people of Alberta.

(a) Parks serving Alberta

In Alberta

Banff	2,564 sq. mi.
Elk Island	75
Jasper	4,200
Waterton	203

In British Columbia

Yoho	507	
Kootenay	543	
Glacier	521	
Mt. Revelstoke	100	8,713 sq. mi. 30%

(b) Wood Buffalo (Mainly in Alberta) 17,300 sq. mi. 59%

(c) Parks serving rest of Canada 3,263 sq. mi. 11%

Total Parks in Canada 29,276 sq. mi. 100%

* No Other Mountains Accessible

Unfortunately all of the accessible mountains in Alberta are contained within the national parks. Thus anyone in Alberta who seeks the grandeur of mountain scenery and the healthful exercise of mountain recreation is forced to use the parks. There is nowhere else.

* The Use of the Parks is Bound to Increase

Over two million persons visited the Alberta parks in 1965. This two million represents an increase of more than 50 percent since 1960.

The Canadian Government Travel Bureau and the Alberta Government Travel Bureau spend hundreds of thousands of dollars urging visitors to come. The Airlines and Railways do likewise. In all its schedules Air Canada lists the Calgary airport as "Calgary/Banff".

During the past five years, while the number of visitors increased more than 50 percent, the number of accommodations increased 31 percent. About half of this total was nothing more than campground facilities.

* Congestion in the Wilderness

The effect in the Banff-Jasper and Waterton Parks has been to crowd great masses of visitors into three highly congested towns instead of providing the facilities that would let them spread out enjoyably into the hidden wilderness areas they really came to see.

By now the grapevine story is spreading all over North America that visitors should stay away from the Canadian national parks unless they want to cope with crowds, queues, heavy traffic and poor service.

To illustrate: See Banff on any summer weekend.

"Motels, cabins, lodges, etc should, wherever possible, be grouped with serviced campgrounds and any other necessary service facilities, such as grocery stores, to minimize impairment to the park and to simplify servicing ... The objective should be to gradually eliminate the many scattered developments that now exist."

National Parks Policy

(Comment - Is this appropriate for an area half as large as Switzerland? Can the visitor really enjoy a fresh mountain morning when he has a service station on one side, a grocery store on the other, a highway in front, a campground at back and gas fumes from the traffic circle all around? Wouldn't it be more appealing to stay in a motel on a shelf above the valley floor, architecturally blended to the mountain with a magnificent landscape and the scent of pine drifting in the window?)

"The leasing of land, and the construction of permanent buildings by private organizations (youth organizations, churches, clubs, etc) should not be permitted in National Parks."

National Parks Policy

(Comment - Is this appropriate for an area half as large as Switzerland? By later specification in the same section, this ruling also includes Alpine Clubs, which certainly are in accord with the most puritan conception of National Park purposes. Recently the department prevented the provision of a series of mountain refuges in this park designed to serve mountaineers in inaccessible country along the continental divide.

* Housing - High Rent, Poor Facilities

Obviously more people are needed to serve so many more visitors, and they require a place to live. The housing situation in Banff and Jasper townsites is abominable. From 1956 to 1965 not a single residential building lot was offered in Banff. Yet according to the Oberlander report of 1961 there were, in Banff, 568 subdivided, but undeveloped lots. The report also showed only one-quarter of the residential buildings to be in good condition, the balance in poor to very poor condition. The present lease policy certainly does nothing to encourage owners to maintain or improve their homes. The shortage of housing has resulted in grave hardship for permanent park staff and has made living conditions for many summer season workers poor almost beyond belief.

To illustrate: From a July 7, 1965 Report by Banff Crag and Canyon.

". . . examples of students paying exorbitant rental rates are being reported daily. Three girls reported paying \$90 per month for a cabin with canvas walls and no running water. Four girls reported living in an attic room where the only area of the room in which they could stand was in the centre of the floor. The girls said they were being assessed \$40 per month each for the accommodation."

. . . From a report in the Calgary Albertan, July 22, 1965

"McKee, who claims his father is a Toronto industrialist, washed dishes for a short time and said there was no way he could afford \$100 per month to live in a small room". (He was arrested for sleeping in the park.) "Rev. John Travis of the Rundle Memorial United Church substantiated the story that several young people were spending nights in sleeping bags in a park near the church and many had come to him seeking shelter in the church basement."

(Comment - Badly housed employees rarely devote themselves wholeheartedly to visitors' comfort.

The lack of housing seems to arise from the Department's reluctance to permit people to live in the park at all. It is permitted for those who work there, but only if living outside the park gates is "not practicable." For the majority of lower income workers in Banff who cannot afford two cars and who have not the benefit of city public transportation systems, living outside the park eleven miles from Banff is certainly not practical, indeed scarcely possible. For Jasper and Lake Louise it is totally impossible.

WINTER TOURISM OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO ECONOMY OF ALBERTA

Albertans generally and most particularly the residents of the parks who serve visitors welcomed the publication by the National Parks Branch of its statement on "Winter Recreation and the National Parks." This paper set at rest doubts which previously existed as to whether the National Parks Department wished to develop serious ski areas in the National Parks or not.

The Minister in a speech in Calgary in March, 1965 went on record as follows:

"It is hoped that this firm definition of policy and a realistic long range planning program will provide skiing facilities that will make Banff skiing areas the best on the North American continent."

If it comes to pass, this will be possibly the greatest boost the tourist industry of Alberta has ever had. The winter ski season is considerably longer than the summer season and its importance to the economy is even greater since it provides work at a time when unemployment is highest.

* Location of Accommodation Vital

If Banff is to be the best ski area on the continent, it would appear that some modification of park policy will be required. It presently calls (for example) for Banff townsite to serve as the primary visitors' service centre for three ski developments and the overnight accommodation location for Mount Norquay ski development.

This "commuter" concept is contrary to the experience of all the top American and European ski resorts. It serves well enough for weekend skiers, but not for the person on a ski holiday. For one thing, many skiers travel to the famous resort areas by air. If going to Banff, they would then take train, bus or cab from Calgary. They do not bring cars with them and they find no joy in the prospect of commuting to the ski slopes each day. The skier prefers to go directly from his hotel to the slopes. He wants to ski down from the mountain and take off his skis at the front door of his hotel.

This being so, the correct location for hotel development is at the termination of the public road leading to the ski area. This also fulfills the requirement of summer usage of hotel facilities since the roads in question are open to the public in summer.

It is encouraging to note that recognition is given in the policy statement to the need for apres-ski day and evening activities and that these will be permitted as integrated components of the hotel, motel or lodge accommodation, both within the visitor service centres and in the lodges adjacent to ski developments. These activities certainly contribute greatly to attracting and holding a ski clientele.

* Visitors Seek Switzerland Concept (See Chart C)

As a contrast to the wilderness policy governing the Rocky Mountain national parks, Switzerland comes to mind as an outstanding example of the values of man-made development in a setting world-famous for its mountain grandeur.

Switzerland has an area of 15,590 square miles - little more than twice the size of Alberta's national parks. Within this area, it supported in 1963 a population of 5,770,000, five large cities and a busy industrial life.

Its hundreds of resort towns and villages, in the 10,000 square miles of Alpine area, handled a tourist total of nearly 5-1/2 million foreign visitors as well as the country's own domestic vacationers.

The Rocky Mountain parks of Alberta, by contrast, had fewer than 7,000 residents plus a visitor total of over two million.

Yet visitors speak always of the beauty of Switzerland and the exhilaration of a healthful outdoor holiday in the Swiss Alps. In Banff, by contrast, visitors complain of the lack of accommodation, the lack of good restaurants, the traffic-jammed streets, the difficulty of finding parking places and the general spoiling of natural beauty. There are even line-ups for the rest rooms.

* U. S. Visitors to Switzerland Significant

In 1965, foreign visitors (almost all from the U.S.) to Alberta's National parks numbered 450,000. Two years earlier in 1963 U.S. visitors to Switzerland numbered 600,000. It might be argued that these Americans in such great numbers visited Switzerland as only one stop in a European holiday. This is true -- but in view of the many historical, cultural and scenic attractions of other European countries and the limited time that most tourists have in which to see them, it seems evident that they actively chose and sought out Switzerland over many other attractions.

The obvious conclusion is that visitors do want the spiritual refreshment and healthful activities available among mountains and forests, but they want them without the dangers and inconvenience of wilderness camping and with the amenities of comfortable accommodation and recreational facilities.

With these provided, the 5-1/2 million tourists who visited Switzerland in 1963 spent 17,793,000 tourist nights -- an average of over three nights per visitor. No official figures are available for comparison, but an estimate can be made. There are approximately 15,000 accommodation and camping units in the Alberta parks. If they were occupied for 125 nights (a fair occupancy rate considering the three month season available) then we had 1,875,000 visitor nights, or an average of approximately one night per visitor.

It seems clear that, far from promoting the benefit, education and enjoyment of visitors to the Western parks, our national parks policy is encouraging a program of "get in, take a quick horrified look around the congested Visitor Service Centre, cast up your eyes to the everlasting hills, and get out as quickly as possible."

DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS POLICY

Historical Factors

The problem extends back to 1885, 20 years before Alberta became a province. At that time, men working on the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway became intrigued by the hot sulphur springs of Banff. Their enthusiastic reports led to the setting aside of 10 square miles in the springs area as the first national park for the people of Canada. (It might be noted that one of the chief assets of the area at that time seemed to be that the railway made this wilderness land accessible to the people of Canada.) In the years following, further parcels of land were added to the parks system -- resulting finally in the present contiguous parks acreages in Alberta and British Columbia of nearly 8,500 square miles.

The Present Policy -- Analysis

(Note: a very thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of the policy has been written by the Banff-Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce.)

Throughout the Policy statement, there are frequent references to preserving the parks in their natural state and public statements of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources and members of his department make it clear that the whole intent of the policy is that there be only a minimum of man-made facilities in the parks

So, on the one hand we have the perpetual wilderness thinkers; on the other, stand the growing numbers who believe that not all of our mountain area should be a "museum" - that a little, at least, should be used for recreational enjoyment. The conflict presents an important matter of policy for government decision.

It is noteworthy that the National Parks Act by Section 4 dedicates the parks "to the people of Canada for their benefit,

education and enjoyment subject to the provisions of this Act and the Regulations and such parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

There is no mention of preservation of the wilderness and, far from forbidding development, it empowers the Governor General in Council to make regulations concerning grant of leases for residences and businesses and controlling amusements and sports. A careful reading of the Act would indicate that what the legislators had in mind was mountain resorts -- though they were to be of a kind that would not impair the parks for the enjoyment of future generations.

The present "wilderness concept" appears to be of more recent origin, reflecting the personal opinion and interpretation of those responsible for parks policy rather than the intent of the original legislators. This liberty of interpretation is indicated in the section entitled "Purpose of National Parks.

" . . . it is reasonable to assume that the words benefit, education and enjoyment were not intended to mean any more than the benefit, education and enjoyment which is associated directly with the products of nature or history."

National Parks Policy

(Comment - We contend that this is not a reasonable assumption. This automatically eliminates skiing, golf, swimming, skating, bowling, curling, theatre, art, ballet, social education, business education, agricultural education, dining on terraces, dancing . . .

Recommended Modifications

Most Albertans, most Canadians, would agree that areas of wilderness are important as places to seek quiet contemplation, spiritual refreshment, and a sense of national heritage. We need many wilderness areas in all parts of Canada but too much wilderness in one tract defeats the purpose of its preservation.

This is indicated in the records of Banff National Park which show that only one visitor in every thousand goes mountain climbing or makes a trip off the highway requiring an overnight stop. Thus few Canadians or visitors ever see our wilderness and cannot therefore find from it benefit, education or enjoyment.

The solution, it seems clear, is not grimly to preserve the wilderness but to make the wilderness more accessible. This can be done through a parks policy which permits visitor service facilities over a much wider range of hitherto inaccessible parks areas. With careful control of architecture and types of developments these facilities would enhance the natural beauty of the parks rather than impair them. Though then accessible, the surrounding wilderness areas would, of course, be left untouched -- the mountains and forest primeval. It should also be possible, by adding smaller wilderness park areas in other regions to compensate for the small number of square miles removed from the wilderness state by man-made developments. In this way, the total wilderness area would remain unchanged.

It is also necessary to provide, in the present and future town and village sites, some further facilities for visitor recreation -- more outdoor activities to help visitors enjoy their mountain holiday to the fullest and more indoor activities for the long dark nights and the frequent occasions when inclement weather makes outdoor activities decidedly unpleasant.

Until this is done, we are failing to provide Canadians with the benefit, education and enjoyment for which the parks were intended.

We are also losing, in Alberta, the great boost to our economy that would result from facilities designed to keep at least our foreign visitors in the parks longer.

Even more significant, we are failing to provide the facilities needed to attract at least as many foreign visitors to our Western parks as travel half way around the world to visit Switzerland.

SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW ALBERTA NATIONAL PARKS ARE ADMINISTERED

LOSS OF FREE ENTERPRISE INCENTIVE

The loss of private investor incentive because of the insecurity of tenure inherent in the newly applied 21 and 42 year lease termination clauses is one of the most serious problems affecting the tourist industry and the provincial economy.

The businessman is faced with the prospect of heavy capital expenditures and sizeable rentals on land -- then having buildings, improvements and business revert to the government without compensation at the end of the brief lease period. Though the policy certainly favors large financial syndicates and corporations over private investors, even the big money interests are obviously backing off. This will certainly result in an accelerating lack of development of tourist facilities in the immediate future and over a prolonged period too unless more security of tenure or fair expropriation arrangements can be worked out.

To illustrate: In January, 1966 tenders were called on a 500 unit, \$5,000,000 hotel at Lake Louise. No bids were received, although one group did submit architectural drawings without firm bid. If this project was serving a need, there should have been many bids. Could it be that investors were scared off?

BUREAUCRATIC INDECISION

The apparent inconsistency of Department decisions and resultant inability of developers to plan for the future in anything approaching a "free enterprise" manner is a further detriment to visitor service facilities in the parks. The endless delays, and the constant necessity to scrap plans that have not met with approval also adds greatly to the cost of doing business in the parks.

To illustrate: In January, 1965 the Department turned down an application by Lake Louise Ski Lifts Limited to erect a ski lift on the Mt. Temple side of Mt. Whitehorn. At that time, the minister pointed out that the Street Report (as yet unpublished) recommended that no new lifts be erected in the area until at least 400 additional beds were available at Lake Louise. Ironically, an application for a proposed new lodge at the foot of the existing sedan lift plus a request for the building of a new ski chalet at Temple had both been turned down by the Department less than a year before.

LEASES DISCOURAGE QUALITY

The 21 and 42 year non-renewable lease policy on businesses in the parks can hardly fail to result in cheaper construction (certainly not in keeping with the parks nor a credit to them), minimum upkeep or improvements and higher prices for visitors.

Short Season

A ski resort on a 21 year lease would have (allowing for a five months ski season) only 105 active months (less than nine normal full years) to return the total investment. Yet buildings and facilities would have to be maintained twelve months a year. Facilities capable of serving both summer and winter visitors at near capacity still would have only nine months of the year in which to operate for an effective total of less than 16 operational years.

Even doubling all this for the 42 year leases, it can be readily seen that the policy will not encourage large dollar investments . . and certainly will encourage gouging the public for the highest prices the tourist traffic will bear.

Discourages Modernization

At the same time the policy will discourage modernization and additions to plant during the course of the lease since, after say twenty-one years of the lease has expired, it would then be impossible to raise mortgage money on the balance of the lease for further developments. Inevitably, deterioration of facilities also will result as lease terminations approach. A building and equipment can get badly run down in 25, 30, 35 years but with the lease running out, the owner's attitude is bound to be "We'll get by because we'll soon be out."

Eliminates Family Business

A further regrettable result of the leasing policy is the elimination of "family" businesses, passing from father to son to grandson -- the kind of family hotels, restaurants and shops that have built the great European resorts to worldwide fame.

BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS

Among the great difficulties in doing business in the parks are the endless delays caused by the centralized control of administration. As long as all decisions are made in Ottawa, these delays will continue because the Department must deal with too great a volume of problems from all the national parks of Canada. Besides, senior officials in Ottawa cannot possibly be expected to have the necessary detailed knowledge of individual parks. They must refer repeatedly therefore to their subordinates in the parks who do have first-hand information and detailed knowledge.

Comment: Anything that makes it difficult to do business in the parks does in some measure act to the detriment of visitor services and unfavorably affects the tourist industry in Alberta. We therefore believe it within the scope of this report to suggest that much greater latitude should be given to Park Superintendents in making decisions about their own parks. They would, of course, be guided by clear rules from the Department but within these limits should be expected to assume responsibility for general administration. The Superintendent's decisions should be subject to appeal to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

Comment: There is strong and frequently expressed feeling among residents and business people in the national parks that they are being unduly subjected to "arbitrary" decisions of government. Whether or not this feeling is based on fact is not the point at issue. It seems clear, however, that much of the dissatisfaction in the parks could be overcome by the establishment of a Board of Appeal to rule on subjects of disagreement between the residents and business people in the parks and the Minister responsible for National Parks or his subordinates.

CONCLUSION

None would quarrel with the concept of the National Parks as belonging to and for the enjoyment of all Canadians. It is neither equitable nor just however for the citizens of one province alone to be deprived of their total recreational area while citizens of other regions are left to enjoy their scenic and recreational resources without hindrance. It is unfair to Albertans personally and of serious detriment to Alberta's tourist industry.

The National Parks problem
is an ALBERTA problem...

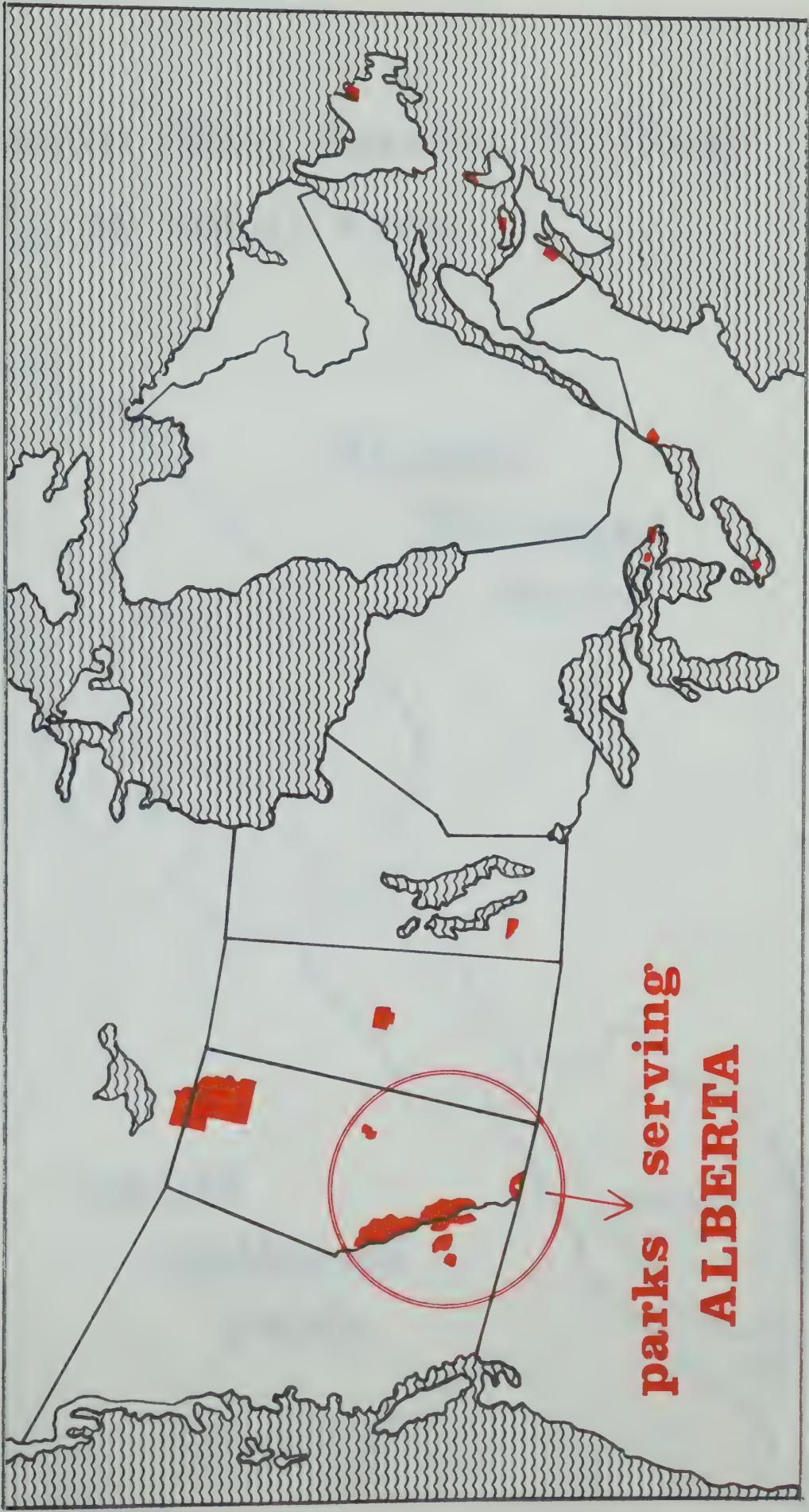
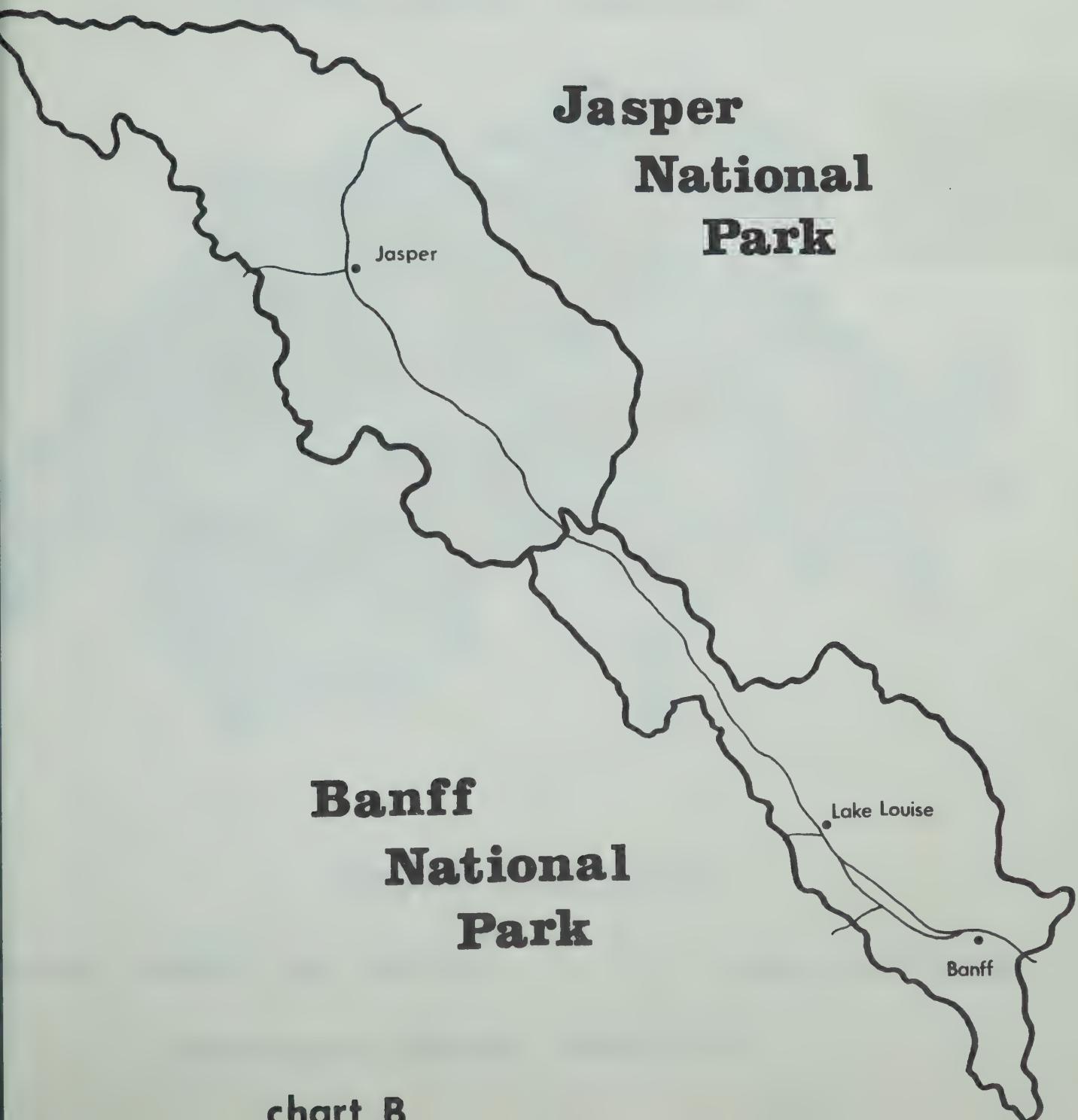


chart A

**Roads Give Access To Only
5% of total area...**



NATIONAL PARKS IN ALBERTA

area 7,042 sq. miles

pop. 7,000

tourists (1965) 2,471,500



SWITZERLAND

area 15,950 sq. miles

pop. 5,770,000

tourists (1963) 5,483,571

West Claims Victory in National Park Bill

From the Washington Bureau of The Rocky Mountain News

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14 — Westerners are claiming a major victory over poor accommodations and high prices in national parks.

Led by Rep. Wayne Aspinall (D-Colo.), they beat down opposition to a bill giving park concessioners protection from "arbitrary" Government action. The House passed the bill on a voice vote Tuesday after defeating a motion to recommit it to the House Interior Committee.

The measure is designed to stimulate development of private, commercial hotels, motels and restaurants by assuring investors they won't be dispossessed on a Government whim.

Backers contend it has been difficult to get good service in the



Aspinall

larger parks such as Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain because of a lack of concessioner rights.

Lack of Security

The lack of security for legitimate interests, they charge, has forced those who do take the chance to charge more than is reasonable in an effort to get as much as possible out of their business before they have to quit.

Meanwhile the number of visitors to the parks each year has grown to 102 million, they said.

The bill:

- Grants to concessioners a "possessory interest" in anything they construct.
- Provides that the Government must pay just compensation for taking over concessioner buildings for building roads or other park facilities.
- Stipulates that all contracts with concessioners may include

provisions assuring concessioners against loss of investment.

Review Contracts

The interior secretary would review all contracts on a yearly basis and would approve the prices charged for food and lodging.

"The Government now depends heavily and must continue to depend heavily on private entrepreneurs to provide visitors to the National Park System with necessary facilities and services," Aspinall said.

Roncalio said he hopes that the number of lodges at Yellowstone can be tripled within the next few years.



